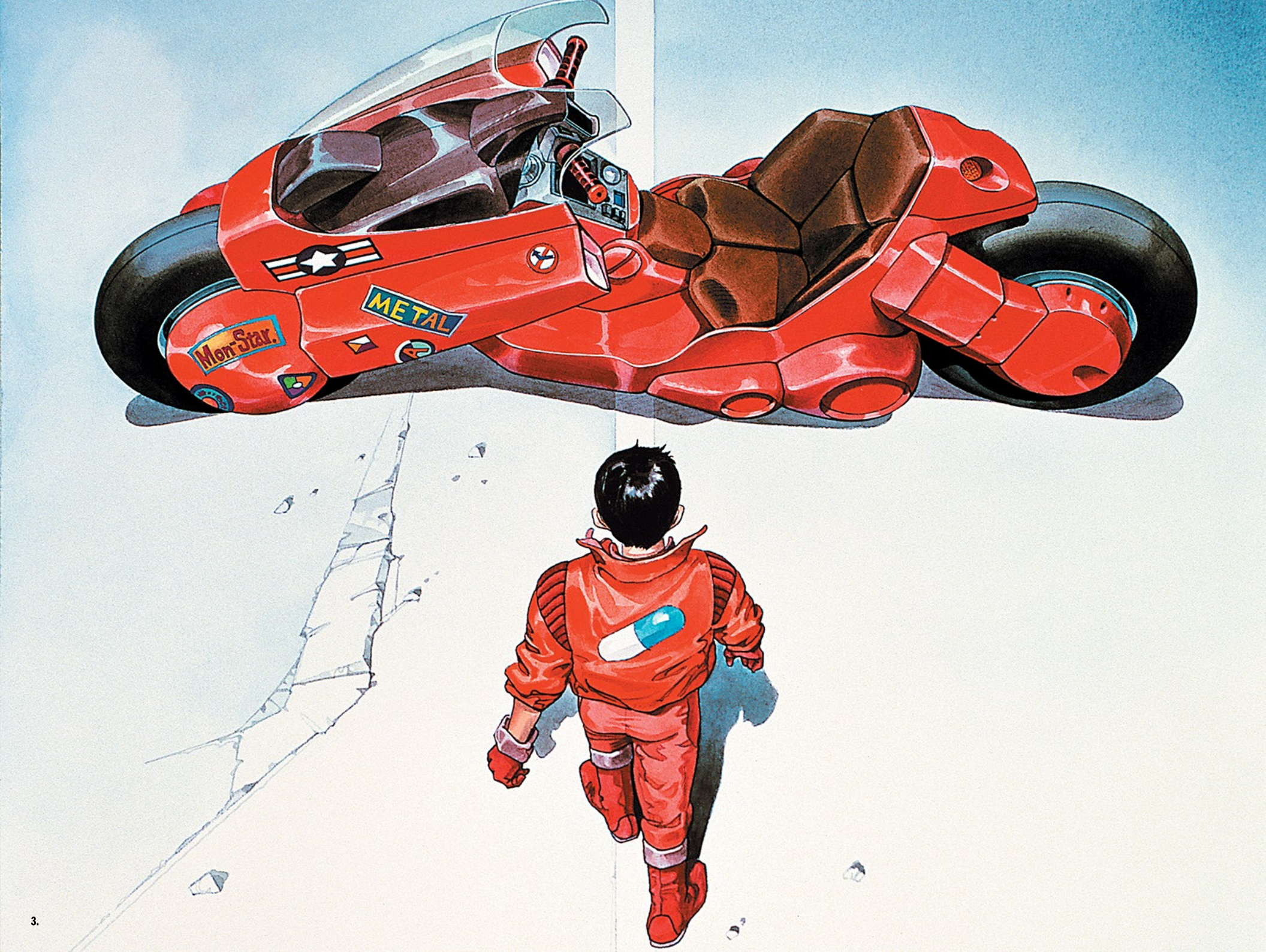
AKIRA
SYMPHONIC SUITE
GEINOH YAMASHIROGUMI

AKIRA

SYMPHONIC SUITE

GEINOH YAMASHIROGUMI

1. KANEDA
2. BATTLE AGAINST CLOWN
3. WINDS OVER NEO-TOKYO
4. TETSUO
5. DOLLS' POLYPHONY
6. SHOHMYOH
7. MUTATION
8. EXODUS FROM THE UNDERGROUND FORTRESS
9. ILLUSION
10. REQUIEM


METAL
Mon-Star.

THE WORLD OF GEINOH YAMASHIROGUMI

Geinoh Yamashirogumi is a unique phenomenon in world music. They have gained a high reputation in Japan over the last two decades for their study and performance of the musical arts of many cultures around the world. At the same time they have developed their own original hi-tech ethnic fusion compositions, having the resources and imagination to create and re-invent what they have studied on the highest intellectual level. Despite their high reputation at home, it is indeed surprising (yet all too typical) that they have received nearly no recognition outside of Japan.

The mastermind behind Geinoh Yamashirogumi is Shouji Yamashiro, acting as composer, arranger, producer and "sound architect", who took over running the group in 1966. At that formative time, emphasis of the group was on destroying the accepted values in the world of choral music. Shortly thereafter Bulgarian styled vocal music, as well as Kecak (ritual choral patterns of Bali) was introduced into their repertoire. In 1974, the group's name was changed to Geinoh Yamashirogumi (The Yamashiro Art Group). This proved to be the birth of a new era for their music. Over the next ten years there followed a series of recordings exploring aspects of traditional music from Japan, other parts of Asia and Africa.

Geinoh Yamashirogumi includes professionals in such fields as cultural anthropology, ethology, molecular biology and information science. There are even two internal study organizations: the Festival Arts Research Institute and the Civilization Sciences Research Institute. This has enabled Geinoh Yamashirogumi to send members out to obscure corners of the globe to conduct research into the unknown (and in some cases, almost extinct) music and the people who make it. Consequently, Geinoh Yamashirogumi has been able to master more than eighty different musical systems. They not only use these skills to faithfully reproduce the original pieces (the ethno-musicological approach), they are also able to use them creatively with the most modern musical technology, to create their own unique compositions on many different harmonic planes.

In 1986 there was an important step in the group's evolution: the release of *RINNE KOKYOGAKU* (Reincarnated Orchestra), a concept album in four movements based on the eternal cycles of birth, death and rebirth. For this Geinoh Yamashirogumi employed the music of many different cultures and refashioned it into a dynamic, hi-tech fusion of distinctly East Asian character and philosophy. The choral idiom was still dominant – the male vocals often resemble Shohmyoh (dark and mesmerizing Buddhist temple chants), while the female vocals possess a pure, rustic beauty (Yamashiro prefers to recruit nonprofessional vocalists). Then there is the vast range of percussion instruments: that of Nohgaku - the music of Noh drama; the Hiradaiko – thundering Japanese drums, the tuned percussion of the Gamelan orchestra, Tibetan instruments, as well as all kinds of metal and wooden objects. Synths are also used, further enhancing the dynamic and dramatic impact and adding rich synthetic coloration. Sound engineers recreated the acoustic characteristics of temples, caves, and mountain gorges – whole landscapes of restless mixing patterns. This is music of huge proportions, both macro- and microcosmic, created by over 200 performers.

Unlike so much world music, this takes full advantage of the possibilities of studio technology. This comes in the form of increased reverberation, differential amplification, tape or digital sound processing, the creation of organic / synthetic timbres, a bold use of stereo effects and much more. Yamashiro seems completely unaffected by arguments as to whether electronic music could ever be "spiritual". If anything, the depth and mystery (and therefore spirituality?) is enhanced by the use of these techniques. In Japan, the notion of the "technical demon" impairing the "spirituality" of music doesn't seem to exist (though I could be wrong!).

Soon after this, Yamashiro and his entourage were invited to create the extraordinary "sonic architecture" for the animated science-fiction film *Akira*. The Geinoh Yamashirogumi sound was expanded further to take in dialogue and explosive sound effects. There are two soundtrack CDs: the original soundtrack retains the mayhem and dialogue, while the 70 minute monster *SYMPHONIC SUITE AKIRA* contains the original unremixed and complete versions. The film director, Katsuhiro Ohtomo, wanted Yamashiro to compose the music for *Akira*, and asked him to take total control over the contents of the soundtrack. Ohtomo even suggested that they should record a separate CD independent from the soundtrack. There was no restriction on the amount of money Yamashiro could spend on producing the music and it shows. The only restriction was time; it took about six months to record. Yamashiro came up with some of his most ambitious and intense compositions, involving heavy percussion, complex, driving Gamelan rhythmic patterns, authentic church organ, powerful bass synth surges and even freaky guitar solos. There is an almost systemic feel to some pieces, while the atmospheric choral passages combined with oriental gothic chants and explosive percussion venture into realms beyond Popol Vuh's *SEI STILL, WISSE ICH BIN*. There are also moments of pure tradition as in the highly stylized Noh Music. Typically, Yamashiro added several huge columns of percussive / synthetic sound to destroy the illusion of a 15th Century theatrical performance! The last 15-minute composition is one of their most exquisite, the centerpiece of which is the extraordinary church organ tones that the warm, sensual chorus melts into.

Yamashiro was next asked to compose music for a water performance system, which was to appear in the center of the grounds at the International Garden and Greenery Exposition at Osaka in 1990. This project became Geinoh Yamashirogumi's next release: *ECOPHONY GAIA*. This 70 minute "macro symphony" is a homage to the Earth's ecosystem. The now unmistakable techno-Gamelan-rock style starts the proceedings, followed by something resembling a tapestry of different musical cultures merging into and overlaying one another together with sounds of nature and subtle electronic music. Mysterious and haunting with stunning production and sense of virtual space, this vast concept is just about the last word in world music. If I had to choose a CD to represent the Earth's collective musical consciousness to send into the infinite depths of space in the hope that it may be found by intelligent life, this would surely be the one.

Shouji Yamashiro isn't a professional. According to him, professionals are too concerned with money and things not essential to music. He wants to devote his mind totally to music. In the future, when the value of preserving the treasured house of the world's ethnic music is more appreciated, perhaps Geinoh Yamashirogumi will receive the credit they surely deserve. Until then, all we can do is urge the non-Japanese record companies to wake up to one of the best kept secrets in Japan. Geinoh Yamashirogumi are a fascinating mixture of past, present and future: traditions, avant-garde, and technical possibilities. In the words of one critic: "To hear the music of Geinoh Yamashirogumi is to understand the music of the 21st Century."

Footnote: This liner note was written in 1992 by Nigel Harris after hearing the 3 CDs that make up a kind of trilogy in the world of hi-tech world music – *RINNE KOKYOGAKU*, *SYMPHONIC SUITE AKIRA*, and *ECOPHONY GAIA*.

5.

ORIGINAL RECORDING (1988)

Composed and Conducted by **YAMASHIRO SHOJI**
Sound Architect: **URATA KEISHI** (EMU), **YAMASHIRO SHOJI**
All Songs Performed by **GEINOH YAMASHIROGUMI**

Additional Musicians
Guitar: **KON TSUYOSHI**
Keyboard: **MORISHITA TOKIHIKO, NAMBA TADASHI**
Percussion: **SAITO NOBU**
Drums: **YAMAKI HIDEO**
Noh: **ISSOH YUKIHIRO** (FUE KATA), **MIYAMASU JUNZO** (TSUZUMI KATA), **SHIRASAKA NOBUYUKI** (OHKAWA KATA), **YAMAZAKI MASAMICHI** (SHITE KATA), **YOSHITANI KIYOSHI** (TAIKO KATA)
Balinese Tantra: **IDA BAGUS SUGATA**
Synthesizer Operation: **TOMINAGA KUNIHIKO, NI-INA KENJI** (EMU)

Supervisor: **SUDA HIDEAKI**
Executive Producer: **IWATA HIROYUKI**
Director: **MURAKI TAKAFUMI**
Engineer: **TAKADA HIDEO, YOSHIOKA KEI-ICHIRO**
Engineering Director: **YODA HEIZO**
Recorded at **VICTOR STUDIO, VARIO-HALL** (SHOUBI GAKUEN)
HITOMI KINEN KOHDOH (SHOWA JYOSHI UNIV.)
Remixed at **VICTOR STUDIO**

Special Thanks to: **OHTOMO KATSUHIRO, KOMPARU SOUEMON, MASUDA SHOUZO, SUZUKI RYOHEI** (KOHDANSHA), **TSUNODA KEN** (KOHDANSHA), **AKETAGAWA SUSUMU** (MAGIC CAPSULE), **MORITA FUMITAKA** (PROSOUND), **IKEGAMI YOSHIHIRO** (ROLAND)

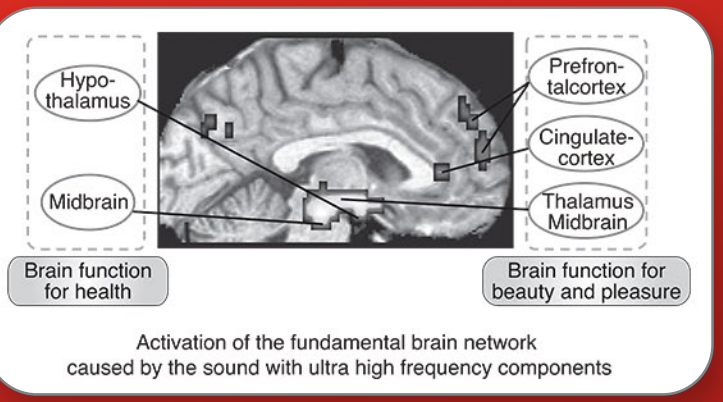
NOTES FOR LISTENERS OF THE CD SYMPHONIC SUITE AKIRA

by Tsutomu Oohashi aka Shoji Yamashiro

This CD has been produced from the same digital master which was used for the original CD released in 1988. As is widely known, the CD format is incapable of capturing sounds having frequency over 22.05 kHz, so, by its nature, it contains no ultra high-frequency components, which are essential to appreciating the "Hypersonic Effect", which, as brain scientist Oohashi Tsutomu, I discovered.

Hypersonic Effect is a phenomenon in which sounds containing significant quantities of non-stationary high-frequency components above the human audible range (max. 20 kHz) evoke various physiological, psychological and behavioral responses and result in a positive effect on the human mind and body.

It is our finding that when a human being is surrounded by such sound, i.e. "Hypersonic Sound", cerebral blood flow increases within the diencephalon and midbrain, an essential part of life maintenance, as well as in the fundamental brain network, a neural projection from the midbrain to the prefrontal cortex (see Figure & Reference 1 below). A greater appreciation of sound reflects an activation of the reward generating neural system, which produces a sense of beauty, pleasure and sensation and is wired into this fundamental brain network. Listeners surrounded by hypersonic sound feel all sound as a whole as more beautiful and comfortable to the ear than if the inaudible ultra high-frequency components are removed from what they are listening to.



Activation of the fundamental brain network
caused by the sound with ultra high frequency components

Hypersonic Sounds enhances the power of the alpha rhythm of the electroencephalogram, which is an index of comfortableness. At the same time, there is an increase of the immune activity of natural killer cells (NK cells), which play an important role in the primary defense against cancer and other diseases, and a decrease in hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol secreted during times of stress.

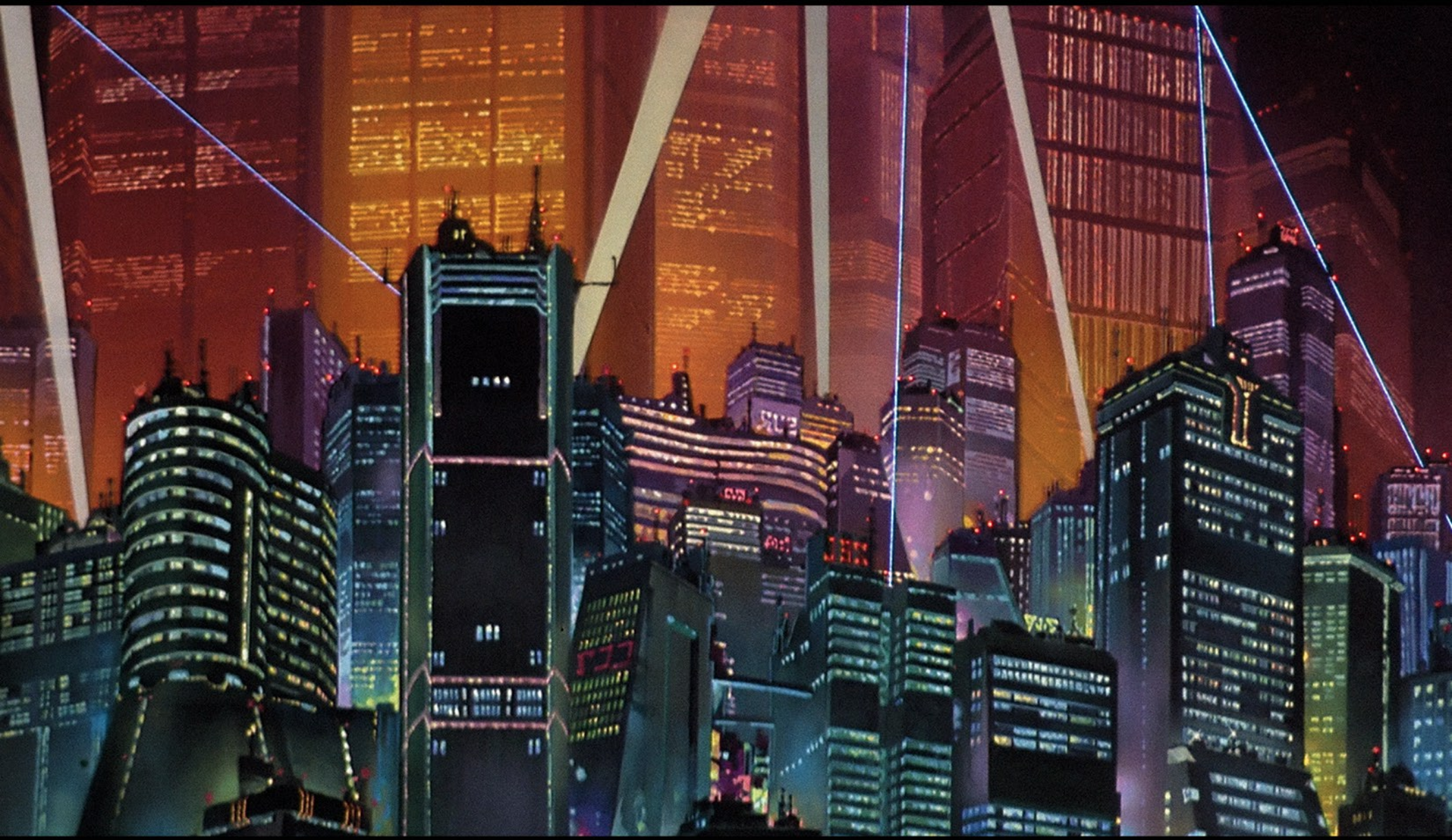
Such effects are primarily obtained during a time when a sound of 40kHz or above and an audible sound co-exist; however, in the high-frequency range of 16kHz to 32kHz, these effects are reversed by the emergence of the "Hypersonic Negative Effect" (see Reference 2 below).

Therefore, it should also be noted that the sound recorded on CD media of which the upper limit of recording frequency is set at 22.05kHz regrettably does not produce Hypersonic Effect; rather, it may cause Hypersonic Negative Effect. We thus recommend that all listeners who want to fully enjoy the sound of any digital media that lacks ultra high-frequency components listen to such media in an environment enriched by ultra high-frequency sound, one in which natural environmental sounds and high quality daily life sounds co-exist.

For your information, ultra high frequency components which activate the fundamental brain are plentifully recorded and contained in the high resolution audio recording of "Symphonic Suite AKIRA 2016 Hyper High Resolution Edition" (PCM192kHz24bit, DSD11.2MHz/5.6MHz) and the vinyl LP to be released by Milan Records, which was also produced from the high resolution master. It is my greatest pleasure as a composer and as a scientist if you also enjoy the Hypersonic Sound edition of Symphonic Suite AKIRA in addition to this CD.

Reference 1
Inaudible high-frequency sounds affect brain activity, A hypersonic effect,
Oohashi T et al. Journal of Neurophysiology, 83:3548-3558, 2000.
http://jn.physiology.org/content/83/6/3548

Reference 2
Frequencies of inaudible high-frequency sounds differentially affect brain activity: Positive and negative hypersonic effects, Fukushima A, Oohashi T et al., PLOSONE, 395464, 2014.
http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0095464



milanmusic.fr ℗ & © 2017 Victor Entertainment, Japan under exclusive license to Editions Milan Music. © 1988 MASH • ROOM/Akira Committee. All Rights Reserved.